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| 1  | UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT |
| 2  | SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK  |
| 3  | Case No. 23-10092-mew          |
| 4  | x                              |
| 5  | In the Matter of:              |
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| 7  | AMERICANAS S.A.,               |
| 8  |                                |
| 9  | Debtor.                        |
| 10 | x                              |
| 11 | United States Bankruptcy Court |
| 12 | One Bowling Green              |
| 13 | New York, NY 10004             |
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| 15 | January 27, 2023               |
| 16 | 1:02 PM                        |
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| 21 | BEFORE:                        |
| 22 | HON MICHAEL E. WILES           |
| 23 | U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE          |
| 24 |                                |
| 25 | ECRO: KB                       |

Page 2 HEARING re Motion Seeking Provisional Relief HEARING re Motion Seeking Entry for Order Scheduling Recognition Hearing and Specifying Form and Manner of Notice Transcribed by: Sonya Ledanski Hyde

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Page 6 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 THE COURT: Good afternoon, everybody. Are the 3 parties ready on the Americanas matter? I can't hear 4 anybody. 5 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, Your Honor. Your Honor, I'm 6 sorry, I was unmuting myself, I apologize. (indiscernible) 7 John Cunningham of White & Case, Your Honor. 8 THE COURT: Okay. Who else do I have who's 9 appearing, and who do you represent? 10 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, again, I'll start. 11 John Cunningham from White & Case, we represent Mr. Antonio 12 Reinaldo Rabelo, the foreign representative of the three 13 Chapter 11 -- I'm sorry, Chapter 15 debtors, sorry. 14 Americanas S.A., JSN Global, SARL, and BTW Digital Lux SARL. 15 And I'm joined by my colleagues, Mr. Starner, Mr. Abelson, 16 and Mr. Pasianotto, Your Honor. 17 MR. BRILLIANT: Your Honor, Allan Brilliant from Dechert LLP on behalf of Banco BTG Pactual S.A., which is 18 one of the largest creditors of the three Chapter 15 19 20 debtors. 21 THE COURT: Okay. 22 MR. SILVERMAN: Your Honor, this is Ronald 23 Silverman, from Hogan Lovells. We are counsel to Deutsche 24 Bank Trust Company Americas, who is the Trustee on each of 25 the two series of senior notes, one of which is issued by

Page 7 1 BTW Digital, the other is issued by JSM Global, and both of 2 them are quaranteed by Americanas, Your Honor. 3 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Cunningham --MS. WELLS: Good afternoon, Your Honor. 4 5 THE COURT: I'm sorry. 6 MS. WELLS: My apologies. For the record, Annie 7 Wells appearing on behalf of the United States Trustee. THE COURT: My apologies, Ms. Wells, I cut you 8 9 off. All right, Mr. Cunningham, please proceed. 10 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Your Honor. First, I 11 want to thank Your Honor and your staff for scheduling this 12 hearing on short notice, and for entering the joint 13 administration order for these three Chapter 15 cases. 14 Second, we also have on the phone, Your Honor, Mr. Rabelo, the foreign representative, as well as our Brazilian law 15 16 declarant, Mr. Francisco Satiro. And third, Your Honor, we 17 have two motions on the agenda. 18 One is the motion for provisional relief 19 requesting application of the section 362 stay for the 20 Chapter 15 debtors and their assets within the territorial 21 jurisdiction of the United States, pending Your Honor's 22 decision on recognition, and lastly a procedural motion scheduling the recognition hearing and approving a form of 23 24 matter of notice in these cases. My litigation partner, 25 Greg Starner and I will be presenting the provisional stay

motion to Your Honor, and my partner Phil Abelson will present the procedural motion.

We have received no objections, formal or informal to either of these two motions, Your Honor. We did hear from Dechert counsel to BTG shortly before this hearing to confirm that, as to the provisional stay that we're seeking, it is only for the three Chapter 15 debtors and limited to the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, which we did confirm.

So, Your Honor, with your permission, I would propose to start by providing the Court with a brief overview of the Americanas Group and its judicial reorganization case, pending in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

THE COURT: Okay, please proceed.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you. Your Honor, as set forth in the foreign representative's verified petition for recognition, the Americanas Group is one of the largest retailers in Brazil, providing a broad range of goods and services throughout Brazil. It is also one of Brazil's oldest retailers, having been founded over 90 years ago, and today has grown to become amongst Brazil's largest online and traditional retail store operators, with approximately 53 million customers, 100,000 -- as well as 100,000 employees in Brazil.

Americanas is also a publicly held company in

Brazil with over 146,000 shareholders. So, how did we get here? Well, Your Honor, it's been a series of rapidly developing and cascading events over the last two weeks. On January 11th, barely two weeks ago, Americanas issued a public notice that it identified certain accounting inconsistencies relating to the mischaracterization of certain purchase financing debts owed to suppliers.

The preliminary estimate of the potential magnitude of these inconsistencies is approximately 20 billion Brazilian Real, or 3.87 billion U.S. dollars. With that public announcement, Your Honor, the company also announced the formation of a special committee of the Board of Directors to investigate these accounting inconsistencies, and that investigation is ongoing. But the reaction to the public announcement of the accounting inconsistencies by the company's creditors in Brazil was swift.

Early attempts at an orderly, consensual standstill and negotiation with creditors were unsuccessful. And rather than a run on the banks, we had the opposite occur. The banks commenced a run on the company, its assets, and its cash. The company responded by seeking and it obtaining a federal Court provisional 30-day injunction against creditor collection act -- actions in Brazil. However, one of the company's lenders, BTG, obtained, on

appeal, suspension of various aspects of that provisional injunctive -- injunction order.

The company then was left with no alternative but to commence a voluntary re-organization case under Brazilian bankruptcy law, known as RJ, which is Brazil's Chapter 11 equivalent. Last week, the company filed for RJ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil with the Brazilian RJ Court, which accepted the RJ petition last week on January the 19th. The company's RJ case has resulted in a judicial stay against creditor enforcement action, similar to the section 362 automatic stay in the United States.

Notwithstanding the RJ stay, the company remains embroiled in creditor and other litigation in Brazil, which the litigation will be decided by the Brazilian proceedings and Courts, including the RJ Court. The company's fervent hope, Your Honor, now is to first stabilize business operations, obtain a breathing spell from creditor actions, and embark upon a negotiation with creditors on the development and ultimate approval of a reorganization plan in Brazil.

So, that turns us now to the United States, Your Honor. And the company has one billion U.S. dollars of unsecured principal amount of New York notes issued at the end of 2020, which remain outstanding and which are governed under New York law indentures. We filed these Chapter 15

cases two days ago, on January the 25th with this Court, and then filed, among other things, the petition for recognition under Chapter 15 of the U.S. Bankruptcy code, as well as, as I mentioned, the motion for provisional stay relief, which we seek from the Court today. So, that's the overview I have, Your Honor. I'll stop there. Any questions Your Honor might have.

THE COURT: What is the venue based on? What is the -- what assets are they named in the United States?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: We have, Your Honor, cash in basically attorney escrow accounts here for Americanas, and we have cash located in bank accounts for the two Luxembourg issuers that are located here in New York, Your Honor.

Again, I know -- I think the amounts are approximately 14, 15,000 in it, with the retainers. I think the total amount is, again, approximately \$15,000.

But we also have, again, New York law govern indentures of one billion dollars, and we have ADRs for the company's stock here in the United States. We have obligations with respect to that, which we believe under precedent here in this district that that also constitutes property located in the United States.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: So, Your Honor, if I may, as I had mentioned we have two motions. The first one's the

Page 12 1 provisional stay motion that I and Mr. Starner will address. 2 May I turn to that motion, Your Honor? 3 THE COURT: Yes, please do. MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you. And if I may, if I 4 5 can start with Mr. Starner on the evidence, and turn it over 6 to Mr. Starner. 7 THE COURT: Yes. 8 MR. STARNER: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Can you 9 hear me okay? 10 THE COURT: I can, thank you. 11 MR. STARNER: Excellent. This is Greg Starner of 12 White & Case on behalf of the foreign representative. What 13 I propose to do, Your Honor, if it pleases the Court, we 14 have -- we're proposed to put forward direct testimony from 15 the two Witnesses through their declarations, and both 16 Witnesses are available on the phone to respond to any 17 questions the Court may have, or any other party may have. 18 THE COURT: Okay. 19 MR. STARNER: So, I'd like to start first with the 20 foreign representative's declaration, which is at docket 21 number three. We would propose to present that and submit 22 that to the Court as Mr. Rabelo's direct testimony. 23 THE COURT: All right, is there any objection to the admission of that declaration into evidence? Anybody on 24 the phone who wishes to cross examine the Witness? All 25

right, there are no objections and no requests for cross examination, the declaration is admitted.

MR. STARNER: Thank you, Your Honor. Turning to the foreign law expert, we had submitted a declaration of Mr. Satiro, that's at docket number four. We would propose to enter that or submit that declaration as his direct testimony in this case.

THE COURT: Is there anybody who objects to the admission of Mr. Satiro's declaration into evidence?

Anybody who wishes to cross examine the Witness? All right, there are no objections, no request for cross examination, and the declaration is admitted.

MR. STARNER: Thanks, Your Honor. Unless there's any questions from the Court for either Witnesses, I would propose to turn it back over to Mr. Cunningham.

THE COURT: No, this is a pretty straightforward motion. As I understand it, you don't have any particular threats or pending litigation or such things, but you're concern's that if anything happens it could interfere with the Brazilian proceedings and with the efforts to kind of treat all creditors equally. Is that essentially what it comes down to?

MR. STARNER: Correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, it's John Cunningham

again. Your Honor's points are exactly correct, and we made clear that our relief that we're seeking, and as we clarified to BTG's counsel is the traditional standard relief of simply having section 362 apply provisionally, until Your Honor rules on recognition. If anybody or any creditor wants to seek relief from the stay, they obviously can, and come to Your Honor, in which we would be able to respond.

But, our concern is because the one billion dollars of New York bonds have accelerated, it has choice of venue in New York, and we had seen, Your Honor, in the -- in other cases, particularly in the OAS case before Judge Bernstein reported it bankruptcy -- report 55BR832015, there was bond holder litigation that had been commenced in that case prior to obtaining the Chapter 15 stay that resulted in various pre-judgement attachments and orders on an Ex Parte basis, which, had we had the stay in place to begin with, we would have been able to avoid.

So, what we're trying to do here is again, institute a -- the standard status quo stay against litigation in the United States. Quite frankly, we have so much creditor litigation going on in Brazil, we're trying to avoid a spillover effect here in the United States, and we would like to make sure, to the extent there is going to be litigation in the United States, that it's before Your Honor

with the protections here in the Chapter 15.

We also believe that this Chapter 15 is going to be necessary to ultimately enforce a -- hopefully a reorganization plan down the road, when we can get one confirmed by the Brazilian Court and come back to Your Honor at that point. So, we definitely see the need for this Chapter 15 and Your Honor's help and assistance. This is the preliminary step of doing, as Your Honor said, the standard stay pending recognition with more to come.

And we view it as a -- almost a stop, look, and listen right now to allow things to play out in Brazil, we will continue to keep this Court updated as this is moving very rapidly, so we will continue to do constant updates to the Court about developments and what's happening. But, that's why we're seeking the provisional stay relief here today, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Are there any objections to the requested relief?

MR. BRILLIANT: Your Honor, it's Allan Brilliant on behalf of BTG. May I be heard?

THE COURT: Yes, you may.

MR. BRILLIANT: Thank you, Your Honor. As I mentioned earlier, we represent Banco BTG Pactual S.A. Like Mr. Cunningham, I'm just going to refer to our client as BTG. BTG is one of the debtor's largest creditors. They're

owed hundreds of millions of dollars. As the debtors point out in their verified petition and as Mr. Starner just mentioned to Your Honor, these cases effectively were precipitated by the debtor's disclosure of massive accounting irregularities. Upon learning of such accounting irregularities, BTG set off certain funds that were in accounts in its possession, as it was entitled to do under its agreements with the debtors.

To date, all the Courts in Brazil have upheld the setoff. Of course to the extent there are any issues with such setoffs, such matters will be decided in Brazil and are not the subject of today's hearing. But we just wanted to make it clear for Your Honor, we're here today because of the accounting irregularities that occurred at the debtors, not because of any of the actions of any of the creditors.

We were just retained this morning, after we reviewed the motion for the provisional relief, as Mr. Cunningham said, we reached out to White & Case to get a clarification of some of the language in the order.

And as Mr. Cunningham said on the hearing today, the only provisional relief that they're getting under the order is what's in proposed paragraph two, that section 362 of the Bankruptcy code shall apply with respect to each of the debtors. And that the limitation of that is to actions and property limited within the territorial jurisdiction of

- the United States. With that confirmation, which I believe we already have, but it would be nice to have it again from Mr. Cunningham, and the understanding here, which is that this is limited to just the debtors and does not impose a stay on any claims against any non-debtor parties, BTG would not have any objection to the entry of the order.
- MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, it's John Cunningham.

  I confirm that the relief we're seeking in the order we're asking you to sign is limited the way Mr. Brilliant just described.
- MR. BRILLIANT: With that, Your Honor, we have no objection.
  - THE COURT: Okay. Very good. Does anybody else wish to be heard?
- 15 MS. WELLS: Your Honor? If I may?
- 16 THE COURT: Yes?

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MS. WELLS: Good afternoon again, for the record Annie Wells on behalf of the United States Trustee. We don't have any -- the Office of the United States Trustee does not have any issues with the provisional relief in the motion, but I -- if I could ask counsel or the debtors to indicate for the record the notice aspect of it, as to what parties were served, and I understand that this is typical for first-stay provisional hearings.

The motion was filed yesterday for the hearing

today, and I just -- I know that certain creditors obviously got notice and they're here, but if record could be clear as to who received notice of today's hearing and the relief being sought.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Certainly. Your Honor, John
Cunningham. I -- can I ask my colleague, Mr. Pasianotto to
address the notice issues? Mr. Pasianotto?

MR. PASIANOTTO: Hi, this is Ricardo Pasianotto for the foreign representative. Can you hear me?

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. PASIANOTTO: Yes. So, as my colleague John Cunningham was saying, we filed an updated notice list shortly before the hearing, including the email and critical address information we have from the parties that we have interacted and we understand would be interested in this case. And so, we served the United States Trustee, the indentured trustee for both issuances, we served certain bank lenders in Brazil and their counsel that have already appeared in the Brazilian restructuring, and we did also serve certain bank lenders that have swap agreements with the debtors, and that's without prejudice of adding further parties to the notice list, as needed.

And just as a point of clarification, and as described in the notice list, we are serving these parties both through email and regular first-class mail. The email

service has already been concluded, and the mail service is still being in progress, and we hope to finalize that (indiscernible) for the first pleadings that were already filed. And if any orders are entered today, we will proceed accordingly afterwards as well.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, I don't believe there's anyone else wishing to weigh in on the motion. We would request that Your Honor grant the motion as set forth as -- or attached to our motion, obviously with any changes or questions Your Honor has, but we did -- as we just did, we just verified the points, for example, that Mr. Brilliant wanted, so happy to address anything else that Your Honor has, otherwise we respectfully request Your Honor grant the provisional stay motion.

THE COURT: All right, I will look at the order.

I've already begun to look at it, I'll make some cosmetic changes, but I will grant the relief that's been requested.

Okay?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you very much, Your Honor.

I can now ask Mr. Abelson to present to Your Honor the

procedural motion with respect to notice and otherwise -
and -- as well as scheduling the recognition hearing. Mr.

Abelson?

MR. ABELSON: Thanks, Mr. Cunningham. Good

1 afternoon, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Good afternoon.

MR. ABELSON: Phil Abelson -- for the record, Phil Abelson, White & Case on behalf of the foreign representative. Your Honor, I will address, as Mr.

Cunningham said, the procedural motion, which is number two on the agenda and can be found at docket number 13. But Your Honor, the procedural motion seeks standard relief for a Chapter 15 case, including setting the date for the recognition hearing, setting the deadline for objection to recognition to be filed, approving the form of notice of the verified -- of the filing of the verified petition, the recognition hearing date, and the objection deadline.

Finding that the 1514(c) requirements are inapplicable to these cases, or if they are applicable, they are waived, and other standard notice provisions, such as publishing the recognition hearing notice on the Chapter 15 debtor's website. Your Honor, no objections, informal or otherwise, have been received, and we have heard from the U -- or, the -- we have not heard from the U.S. Trustee's office as to any issues with respect to the order.

With that, Your Honor, unless you have any questions, we would request approval of the procedural motion.

25 THE COURT: Okay. It seems to me that your order

Page 21 1 granting provisional relief should be served with the rest 2 of the notice documents, and that that should be included in 3 the proposed scheduling order. MR. ABELSON: That's fine, Your Honor. Thank you. 5 MR. SILVERMAN: Your Honor, this is Ronald 6 Silverman. May I be heard, please? 7 THE COURT: Yeah. 8 MR. SILVERMAN: Thank you, Your Honor. 9 actually a technical point. We had emailed White & Case 10 yesterday, but part of the mechanics suggested for providing 11 the notice documents would be that Deutsche Bank Trust 12 Company Americas would receive the notice documents from a 13 foreign representative, and it would forward them onto DTC 14 to disseminate them. At -- we think that it's more 15 efficient, if possible, for the foreign representative or 16 the debtor to just forward them on directly to DTC for 17 dissemination and we described how that can be done so that 18 it doesn't really turn the indentured trustee into a 19 noticing agent, and we would just suggest that that 20 procedure be utilized. 21 THE COURT: Isn't being a noticing agent one of 22 the indentured trustee's jobs? MR. SILVERMAN: Well, not in the sense that it's 23 24 (indiscernible) or disseminating Bankruptcy notices 25 generally to creditors. And it -- since the Debtor or the

Page 22 1 foreign representative will be taking care of noticing of 2 various parties generally, we thought it made sense to avoid 3 that (indiscernible). THE COURT: This provision only asks that you 4 5 assist in giving notice to the noteholders that you 6 represent, right? 7 MR. SILVERMAN: That's right, Your Honor. THE COURT: All right, what's the Debtor's 8 9 position on this? MR. CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, to be honest we 10 11 haven't discussed it with the foreign representative. 12 sure this is the type of (indiscernible) described as 13 plumbing that we could work out with the indentured trustee. 14 Somehow the information has to get to DTC, I just don't know 15 if there's registration requirements or anything that would 16 needed -- we would need to be able to do, just we haven't 17 looked at it. So, we can add some qualifications to -- it 18 looks like it's paragraph eight or clause eight of the order 19 that discusses this, that makes it clear that we'll work 20 with the indentured trustee to make sure somehow the 21 documents get to the DTC. 22 (indiscernible) thank you very MR. SILVERMAN: 23 much. We're happy to work with the foreign representative. THE COURT: All right, you can come back to me if 24 25 there's an issue, but frankly this happens all the time and

Page 23 a little confused why the indentured trustee -- it seems to me the indentured trustee would want all the noteholders to know about, and that it's the kind of communication that probably the indentured trustee is supposed to be sending to the noteholders. So, I'll trust that you're going to work that out, but come back to me if you have an issue. MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Your Honor. MR. SILVERMAN: Thank you, Your Honor. THE COURT: All right. (indiscernible) anybody else who wishes to be heard on the recognition scheduling and notice? Okay. Is the provision in the proposed order that -- and maybe I'm just having a memory blank here, but it says that the seven-day objection period under rule 1012(b) and local rule 9006-1(b) hereby waived. What is that? I didn't have a chance to look up the local rule. don't see a seven-day objection period in rule 12 -- in 12(b). MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, so -- apologies, Your Honor. THE COURT: Are you looking to -- for a objection date that's less than seven days before the hearing? What is it you're looking for? MR. CUNNINGHAM: No, I don't believe so, Your In fact, we can turn to the actual scheduling in a It's merely, I think, just allow for flexibility to

the extent that the Court otherwise wanted to -- was

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Page 24 1 prepared to schedule it for an earlier date. I don't see us 2 trying to limit objection to recognition to anything shorter 3 than seven days before the hearing. 4 THE COURT: Okay. 5 MR. CUNNINGHAM: So, I don't (indiscernible), 6 yeah. 7 THE COURT: We can give you March 1st at 11:00 for your recognition hearing with an objection deadline of 8 9 February 22nd, if that works for you, and then I don't think 10 that provision's -- needs to be in there, the seven-day 11 provision. 12 MR. CUNNINGHAM: That works for White & Case, Your 13 Honor, and we have our two Declarants on the phone. 14 Rabelo and our Brazilian (indiscernible) Declarant. Are 15 there any -- do these gentlemen -- I'm sorry to ask live, do 16 you have any issues with March the 1st, for the hearing? 17 MR. RABELO: No, (indiscernible). 18 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Okay. 19 THE COURT: Okay. 20 MR. CUNNINGHAM: So, Your Honor, thank you. 21 works for us. Thank you very much, Your Honor. 22 THE COURT: And the notice parties, where do I 23 find that definition? I don't like to have orders that are 24 not self-contained, and that kind of require that people look at other documents, so who are the notice parties? 25

Page 25 1 MR. CUNNINGHAM: The notice parties, Your Honor, 2 are identified on exhibit B, and they're defined in 3 paragraph five of the motion. 4 THE COURT: Okay. 5 MR. CUNNINGHAM: But if Your Honor would like, we 6 can add a definition -- the same definition to the order. 7 THE COURT: Yes, I would appreciate that. 8 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Okay. We'll do that, Your Honor. 9 THE COURT: And notice documents, is that a 10 defined term somewhere? 11 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Notice documents, Your Honor, is 12 -- it is. Same paragraph, paragraph five of the motion. 13 THE COURT: Yeah, I would prefer to have the definition in the order, okay? 14 15 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yup, will do, Your Honor. 16 THE COURT: And make sure it includes the 17 provisional relief order. 18 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes. We will add that as well. 19 THE COURT: Okay. 20 MS. WELLS: Your Honor? Again, Annie Wells for The March 1st, is that Your Honor's 10:00AM 21 the UST. 22 calendar or an afternoon calendar? THE COURT: 11:00. 23 24 MS. WELLS: Thank you. 25 THE COURT: We'll do this one at 11:00, okay? All

Page 26 1 right, I'll let you modify the scheduling order, including 2 however you want to deal with this issue with the indentured trustee. We'll get the provisional relief order on file, 3 and we'll just provide in that that it'll be served with the 4 other order and without other documents required to be 5 6 served under the other order. Okay? 7 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, Your Honor. 8 THE COURT: All right. Is there anything else for 9 today? 10 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Not from the foreign 11 representative, Your Honor. THE COURT: Anybody else who's on the phone have 12 13 anything they wish to raise at this time? All right, very 14 good. We'll look for your scheduling order, we'll get the 15 provisional relief order on file, and otherwise we are 16 adjourned. 17 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Your Honor. Once 18 again, we're deeply appreciative to you and your staff for 19 today's hearing. Thank you s -- very much. 20 THE COURT: Okay. All right, thank you all, we 21 are adjourned. 22 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Your Honor. 23 MR. SILVERMAN: Thank you, Your Honor. 24 (Whereupon these proceedings were concluded at 25 1:34 PM)

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